

Mary Beth is only 15 months old, but someday, when she is old enough to understand the sacrifice that her mother gave, it will be quite a story that Ron will be able to sit down and tell her about.

Mr. Speaker, I think about next week or the week following when we start debating the partial birth abortion again, and 10 days ago in the hospital I told Margie that we would pass the partial birth abortion bill and that we would get it through the Senate and, with God's help, we would override a veto this year. Because I believe that probably the most important thing that we can do for Margie, for the Janovich family, is to pass a bill that respects life, that respects the unborn child, that gives hope and opportunity to every unborn child.

Mr. Speaker, as I think about the President's dilemma, as he was presented so much false evidence last time by the pro-abortion lobby, I would hope and I would pray that our President would think seriously again about this legislation; that when it comes before him this year that he would think about the Janoviches, that he think about the sacrifice that Margie Janovich gave and made for her child.

Life is precious. As he talked last week during his speech on the cloning issue, talking about that an embryo has a soul, well, Mr. Speaker, I would hearken to advise the President that, yes, an embryo has a soul and that embryo is an unborn child only 9 months later.

So Margie was a tremendous inspiration to me, Ron and the kids. I want to thank them for everything that they have done because it has been a story that has touched every life in Omaha, NE, in the Midwest, and I believe that as America finds out about Margie Janovich, we will once again turn our hearts towards the value of life and the value of the unborn child. May God bless her.

THE PERSIAN GULF WAR HELP LINE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. FILNER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, tonight I want to report some good news for our Nation's Persian Gulf war veterans. The Veterans Administration has set up a help line phone number that gulf war veterans can call for health examinations. Veterans who are in need of care or who wish to take advantage of the physical examination under the Persian Gulf registry or who have general questions about their experience in the Persian Gulf war can call the VA's Persian Gulf information hot line. That number is 1-800-PGW-VETS. Or, if they need the numbers, 1-800-749-8387.

Active-duty service members who were deployed to the gulf during the war may receive a health examination

through military treatment facilities by calling 1-800-796-9699. The VA encourages all gulf war veterans to participate in this important program.

I am proud to support President Clinton's action to make it easier for Persian Gulf war veterans to collect compensation benefits for undiagnosed illnesses resulting from this war. At the urging of Veterans Affairs Secretary Jesse Brown, the President agreed to extend the period during which undiagnosed illnesses, such as Persian Gulf war syndrome, will be considered related to a veteran's service in the gulf, thereby entitling that veteran to compensation benefits.

Congress had begun to address this problem prior to President Clinton's decision. My esteemed colleague, the gentleman from Illinois, Mr. LANE EVANS, the ranking member on the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, introduced a bill earlier this year that would lengthen the time that gulf war veterans can file for disability compensation. I was proud to be an original cosponsor of this bill, the Persian Gulf War Veterans Compensation Act.

President Clinton listened to Congress, and to the thousands of veterans across the Nation who are suffering from the mysterious illness known as Persian Gulf War Syndrome. Mr. Speaker, our inability to find an exact cause of gulf war syndrome requires that we give our veterans the benefit of the doubt. We must move forward and provide care for our suffering Persian Gulf war veterans even as the search continues for a cause of this syndrome.

America and this Congress must not shirk its responsibilities to its veterans. I applaud the actions taken by President Clinton and the Veterans Administration to give our veterans the care that they need and deserve.

Remember that help line phone number. It is 1-800-749-8387. Please get the help that is now offered through the Veterans Administration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. SOUDER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. SOUDER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extension of Remarks.]

BIPARTISAN RETREAT IN HERSHEY A SUCCESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. KIND] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to my colleagues in the House, both Republican and Democrat alike, who attended the bipartisan retreat in Hershey, PA, last weekend, but especially to commend the gentleman from Illinois, Republican Representative RAY LAHOOD, and the gentleman from Colorado, Democratic Representative DAVID SKAGGS, for their vision

and all the hard work they put into making the retreat last weekend, I think, an unqualified success.

I would also like to commend the political leadership of both parties, the gentleman from Georgia, Speaker GINGRICH, and the gentleman from Missouri, DICK GEPHARDT, for their presence, without whom this whole attempt to try to find greater civility in the House of Representatives will not go anywhere.

I also want to thank the Pew Charitable Trust and the Aspen Institute for investing in this retreat and making sure not one taxpayer dollar went for this retreat, and to give the Members a chance to explore civility.

The premise for this historic gathering, unprecedented in our Nation's history, was very simple, and that is for any legislature to function, its members must have a level of trust and understanding of one another. That trust can only develop when the members have an opportunity to get to know one another a little bit better, as people, and outside the partisan political arena.

When people know each other and their spouses and their children, they are less likely to let policy differences turn into personal animosity or hostility or to question one another's motives. In short, it is a lot harder to demonize someone when you know them on an individual and personal level.

Over 200 Members came together in an attempt to explore ways in which to bring greater civility to the House of Representatives. No legislative business was conducted, no political games, just Members and their families taking time to get together, to get to know one another a little better, and to examine the environment in the House of Representatives and figure out how we can do the Nation's work at a level of decorum that this great democracy deserves.

This was not a hug-fest. We continue to recognize that there will be deep, passionate policy differences between the parties. I think today's debate on the House resolution was a classic example, and we have no desire to blur those distinctions. Conflict in Congress is unavoidable, and the Nation is well served by healthy and vigorous debate. In fact, it is crucial to the functioning of this democracy.

The retreat, rather, was about handling those disagreements constructively and honoring our democracy with debates that are more civil, more respectful and, ultimately, more productive; in short, to explore ways where we can disagree without being disagreeable.

To build upon the future, we have to have knowledge of the past. History teaches us that when we unite as a country for a grand purpose there is nothing that we cannot accomplish. It was altogether fitting that during the course of the retreat some of us Members took time to tour the Gettysburg National Battlefield. That is the site

where the northern and southern armies met by chance during 3 days in July 1863 and engaged in the largest military battle in the Western Hemisphere. When the armies marched away, they left behind more than 51,000 dead, wounded, or missing soldiers in a battle that many historians believed determined the fate of the Nation. These were men who in President Lincoln's words gave their last full measure of devotion so this Nation might endure.

I wanted to especially thank National Park Service employee Eric Campbell for his terrific guided tour of the battlefield. In fact, he described in vivid detail the battle over Little Round Top, which many military historians felt was the crucial ingredient to the outcome of the battle. During that battle there was a lieutenant by the name of Joshua Campbell, who was trying to hold the high ground for the Northern army, the strategic high ground. And when his men ran out of ammunition, they had two options that they faced: Either retreat and give up the high ground, and perhaps forfeit the strategic battleground and possibly the entire military conflict; or to charge ahead. And they opted to lead a bayonet charge down the hill, which swept off the Confederate forces and saved the day for the Union Army there.

When we think about the sacrifices that the men gave on that battlefield, what they gave for their country, and then to ask the House to, in a more civil way, conduct this Nation's business, I do not think that is a lot to ask from us as representatives of the country.

Perhaps that is why the institution has become more uncivil recently. We forget this is not about us as Members or as individuals. It is really about the country, about all of us in this Nation, those who came before us, those who will come after us, our children and our children's children.

It is perhaps when we start thinking of it in personal terms that we begin acting aggressive, defensive and rude, all those things that everybody does when we feel threatened. This is not about us as individual Members, it is rather about this great country, everybody, who have come together to fight for the principles this country was founded on.

All of us, I think, crave to be part of something larger than ourselves, which is probably why most of us ran for the House of Representatives to begin with. That is why we have families, why we participate in church, join organizations, just to be a part of something significant, noble, decent, and right.

There is no simple cure for the incivility we see too often in American society, just as there is no simple cure for the rancor and mistrust in the House at times.

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Last weekend's retreat is no panacea but it is a start. As Members of Con-

gress, we have an enormous responsibility to the Nation. Our country deserves better from all of us, but we look upon our leaders to set the standard, as we should, and with some luck and good will, what has begun last weekend will help us better meet that great responsibility to the Nation.

FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF HELMS-BURTON LEGISLATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DUNCAN). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. DIAZ-BALART] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, a plea has gone out by the President of the National Commission, Jose Marti, the National Commission on Human Rights in Cuba, Professor Amador Blanco Hernandez, for three political prisoners who are in a very, very difficult situation right now. They have been on a hunger strike since February 20 because of the brutal, inconceivably inhumane conditions that they have been facing. One of them, and I will read their names, Juan Bruno Lopez Vazquez, Herminio Gonzalez Torna, and one of them, Levin Cordova Garcia, is near death.

Now, Professor Blanco Hernandez is seeking some signs of solidarity and outrage in the international community. I today remember and my thoughts go out to all the Cuban political prisoners, but especially to these three, such dignified representatives of the Cuban people who are facing that extraordinarily difficult situation, and have had to embark on hunger strikes to try to get some attention of the world community so that their conditions will be looked at and pressure will be put on the Cuban dictatorship so that their conditions can improve.

Mr. Speaker, it has been a year since President Clinton signed the Helms-Burton law, March 12, 1996. Sometimes it seems difficult to believe that it has been only a year, considering all that has happened since. Not just Castro but all those who seek to take advantage of the degradation and exploitation imposed by the dictator on the Cuban people received a blow by the adoption of Helms-Burton. With urgency, those who have invested or who are thinking of doing so in Castro's feudal, antiworker, slave economy have had to reconsider their actions or their intentions in light of the risk of being physically excluded from the world's largest market, the United States.

That is why the European Union, in an act that classifies it as an unscrupulous merchandiser, has taken its complaint against U.S. sanctions to the World Trade Organization.

The strongest blow in Helms-Burton against those who seek the definitive consolidation of the degradation of the Cuban people, of the oppression and the humiliation that they have to bear at the hands of the Castro brothers and the handful of their minions who also

live the "dolce vita," however, is not what is most discussed and debated about Helms-Burton. It has nothing to do with the exclusion of foreigners from the United States who knowingly traffic in properties stolen from Americans, nor with lawsuits against those traffickers.

What is most painful for those who seek the permanence of the oppression of the Cuban people is that the United States sanctions against the dictatorship can no longer be lifted by the President until there is a genuine Democratic transition on the island.

Castro's defenders and the unscrupulous merchandisers had great hopes for President Clinton. They saw how he, in coordination with some large business interests, lifted the embargo on Vietnam and reestablished diplomatic relations with that country. With normalization of relations, a wide gamut of credits and other financing possibilities are opened to those who seek to do business with a recently legitimized regime.

They sought the same for Cuba. It does not matter that Castro has no money to buy anything from the unscrupulous merchandisers. The financing mechanisms would take care of that. That is what they are there for. That is why those financing mechanisms have money from the United States taxpayer.

Ever since Helms-Burton, the dreams that some had of being able to obtain massive financing for lucrative business deals with the Cuban dictator have gone down the drain. Congress has made absolutely clear that the President cannot lift the embargo and facilitate credits for those who seek to profit from deals in Cuba, nor authorize massive United States tourism to Cuba, until there is a government in Cuba that respects the Cuban people, a government that liberates all political prisoners, that legalizes all political activity and that agrees to hold free and fair elections. That requirement in Helms-Burton, known as the codification of the embargo, is definitive and will be decisive in Cuba's salvation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. MANZULLO] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. MANZULLO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. SMITH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. SMITH of Michigan addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]